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THE MUSLIM VOICE

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Love and Mercy

REFLECTIONS ON MARRIAGE

By Abdul-Rehman Malik

Just as the weather becomes warm, our Imams get very worried and start talking about marriage... and with good reason...

As Spring approaches some very familiar things begin to happen. The snow melts and along with it goes the winter chill. The trees blossom, the sun begins to shine, the grass becomes green again, and it is as though the whole world comes alive with a colour and vibrancy that would have seemed unimaginable a few short months ago.

However, this remarkable natural change is accompanied by an equally radical change in the Muslim community: just as the weather becomes warmer, our Imams get very worried and start talking about marriage.

So we begin the seemingly endless discussion all over again, because we know that spring doesn't only signify a change in the weather, it also signifies a change in dress, a change in behaviour and a change in attitudes around us -- all of which combine to form a potent challenge to our Islam.

Our Imams and leaders are quick to point out the necessity for marriage, and what they have to say needs our full attention. They remind us how society views sex and how society accepts the concept of sexual liberation and powerfully promotes it through the media. We are reminded that physical intimacy is sacred in Islam and are urged to control our desires through marriage.

Besides, we are not only urged to get married, but many of our Imams are adamant on another important point: they encourage us to get married while we are in school. And here is where the real disagreement begins, even though many of us will not disagree that marriage, when one has sufficient means, is essential, nor will we doubt that springtime seems to bring on a real challenge to our Islam.

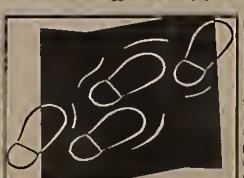
Still, many Muslim students feel uncomfortable with the idea of getting married *right now*. They feel uneasy about getting married without a degree in hand, or without a job. At the same time many confide in each other about how difficult it is to keep temptations at bay and how they look forward to married life as a release for all their physical urges.

This presents a unique dichotomy: a recognition of the need for marriage, while at the same time, a reluctance, often culturally inspired, to actually get married.

While this dilemma is serious, it is indicative of profound flaws in our approach to marriage. The scenario above indicates that many of us have reduced the institution of marriage to its mere physical dimensions.

Inadvertently, we have adopted the western ideal of love as simply a physical attraction, and see marriage as a way facilitating it. In this way we have removed from love and marriage a powerful underlying spirituality, which is so beautifully depicted in the Qur'an.

This is not to suggest that the physical



component of marriage is not important, it clearly is. Rather, marriage becomes complete when viewed with a deeper understanding. Therefore we must begin this discussion with the basis of faith, the Qur'an, and with its wisdom construct a practical approach that seeks to develop a comprehensive approach to marriage, including the need to get married early.

Allah tells us in the Qur'an, "Permitted to you on the night of the fasts is the approach to your wives. They are your garments and you are their garments" (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:187). The analogy of the garment is a powerful one because it encompasses a many things. A garment doesn't simply cover the body, but also beautifies it; it serves as a protection and as a comfort.

The same ideas apply to marriage. By being garments, a husband and wife not only become a mutual protection for one another against vice, but the marriage relationship becomes a source of comfort and grace. The affection between a husband and wife must rest in the recognition that their lives are connected through the mercy of Allah.

The Qur'an says: "Another of His signs is that He created mates for you of your own kind so that you may find security in them and [He] has instilled love and mercy between you" (Surah Al-Rum, 22).

The basis of marriage is deeper than mere physical attraction; it is based on a sense of security and wholeness that develops out of Allah's mercy and compassion. The "love and mercy" that is described in this verse is something unique, because to develop this kind of mutual feeling fully, both brothers and sisters need to find spouses on the criterion of faith.

Examining my own life, I find that I interact with so many brothers with whom I share a strong bond of fraternity. If I remove myself from my surroundings and look at these ties objectively, it is apparent that without Islam many of us might never have met.

In fact, we probably would not have even come into contact with one another, because our ideas and backgrounds are so different that there would have been no basis for friendship.

Islam provides the basis for this brotherhood and sisterhood. In the same way, Islam provides the atmosphere in which the best union between man and woman can take place.

It is apparent that love in the Western sense has become an obsolete construct for Muslims. The more we look to the Qur'an and the life of our Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, it is clear that we are dealing with a program that gives us stability, clarity of thought, and a sense of dynamism that transcends both the private and public realm.

School

If we recognize and accept the Qur'anic concept of mutual love, we must discuss this problem of getting married while we are still in school.

The university environment is both a challenge and a blessing. The challenges are well known, but the blessings are numerous. More than just the hope of getting a degree, or entering Law or Medicine, the university provides us with a forum to interact with Muslims in a productive and meaningful way.

This is time in our lives when we are formulating ideas, struggling with concerns, and having experiences that will mould our consciousness. It is a period of intense intellectual growth and development.

By the time we leave university and begin to think about the future, many of our attitudes and goals are already set. If a brother and sister get married at this stage they begin life together already having developed a worldview for themselves.

They grow together by trying to fuse together their respective ideas about life. And while this is may or may not be a

Continued on page 21

WHAT IS THE MUSLIM VOICE?

The Muslim Voice is published every two weeks by the Muslim Students' Association at the University of Toronto.

The Muslim Voice seeks to present Muslim perspectives on issues of concern to students. The majority of the articles are written by students.

During the 1993-94 university year, we had 14 issues of the newsletter. Our circulation started at 250 and rose to approximately 700 copies by the end of the year.

Everyone is encouraged to contribute by writing articles, giving their reactions to articles written, or giving us constructive criticism on how to improve our publication.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call Kamal Syed, at 905-890-8620, or email frabbani@epas.utoronto.ca (Faraz Rabbani).

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The Dilemma and Delusion of Muslims in North America

By Faisal Siddiqui

It is vital for us as Muslims in America to paint a true picture of Islam in this country. Let us delude ourselves no more. Muslims love to boast that "Islam is the fastest growing religion in America." This is a lie.

The above nice, little quote is often put forth in negligence – that negligence is in correctly assessing the state of the Muslim community in North America.

It may be that Islam gains more converts than any other religion in the US, I have no doubt in this, but as far as being the "fastest growing religion," the evidence is truly lacking.

What this superficial statistic fails to present is the fact that many born Muslims, be they American or immigrants, leave Islam for other 'deens' such as materialism, blind assimilation into American society, atheism, and the shirk of taking, as the Qur'an says, desires as one's Lord.

Lets face it: for that one Muslim who makes it out of an American high school and college, accepting Islam into their life, how many Muslims do we lose to the evils of American society?

I would even venture to say that if we lost 10 kids for every one that turned out Islamically inclined (and thus considers themselves Muslims) such a statistic would not be bloated.

The fact that they even CONSIDER themselves Muslims is significant here; I have met many folk who say either "Oh yeah, my parents are Muslim," implying that they are not, or "Well, I was born Muslim, but... _____"; you can fill in the blanks yourself here.

So let us truly understand the situation of Muslims in North America. What also needs mentioning is that when we say Islam is the "fastest growing religion in America," a false portrait is created; we think that the increase is coming from conversions solely.

This is untrue as well. 50% of the American Muslim population are indigenous African-American Muslims.

The rest are immigrants, with converts making up a small percentage somewhere on the rim.

The supposed "spread" of Islam we think of when we say "Islam is the fastest growing religion," is, in actuality, due primarily to: (1) a large immigration of Muslims to the US; and (2) an increase in number of children born to Muslim families here -- most of these numbers come from the African-American community simply because they are indigenous.

Reality check again: Americans are not coming to Islam because of our great da'wah efforts. Most converts I have met have come to Islam on their own.

Others have been influenced by one Muslim person, such as a roommate or friend. But hardly any have come to this deen by a massive or organized da'wah effort.

So let us not become enchanted with the idea that "Islam is the fastest growing religion in the US" and that we are making some sort of great contribution to its increase.

In chemistry we are taught that an equilibrium is reached when the amount of substance that leaves is equaled to the amount that is gained -- so that no progress is made, be it good or bad.

If anything, we are loosing more Muslims than we are gaining here in the North America. So we have less than an equilibrium: we have a digression.

If we keep this true picture in mind, Insha'Allah, it will only help to keep us on ground level and to realize the amount of work that needs to be done.

W'Allahu 'Aalim.

Reflections on Marriage

(Continued from page 1)

painful process, Muslims must recognize that these two individuals have missed an important opportunity for mutual growth.

Marriage while in School

On the other hand, let us take the example of two Muslims who marry while still in school. They still go through the same meaningful dialogue with their peers, but instead of developing ideas and approaches to Islam and life on their own, they develop them together. They continue the day-to-day discussions at home, they share ideas and develop a unified approach to their circumstances.

Early marriage, as encouraged by Islam, provides the security and stability of having one's ideas heard and respected. Moreover, this entire phase of life can become an opportunity for Islamic development at a more compelling level.

When the companions of the Prophet (saw) were getting married in their formative years, they were not going to school; rather, they were struggling. The companions of the Prophet (saw), both male and female, were engaged in Jihad. They were building a nation, and they were raising children, while perfecting and enhancing their *Deen*.

The dynamism and power of the community in Medina is the ideal to which we all aspire. Could Khalid ibn Walid have led the armies of Islam without a family or a wife?

The Community

There is a lesson in these stories which is lost on many of us. To have a dynamic community does not only require energetic people but also a cohesive group of Muslims whose ideas on Islam and life are relatively similar.

If this community wants to be the group of believers who command good and forbid evil, the process must begin within the family and the institution of marriage. And getting married while in our formative years makes good Islamic sense.

A brother once remarked to me that one of the things he looks forward to about married life is waking up with his wife for the *Tahajjud* and *Qiyam-ul-layl* (night) prayers.

At first, this struck me as quite odd, but the more I thought about it the more beautiful his observation became. He sees, as we all should, marriage as a form of worship and a way of facilitating our faith in the Way of our Creator.

The typical romantic notions of this society seem distant and silly when viewed in light of the love and mercy that is developed when we choose to find them in our Lord.

Eternity

There is one final experience that bears ntioning. When my grandmother, may Allah grant her Paradise, passed away several years ago I had the opportunity to be by her side and witness the reactions of my family.

Several days after the funeral my grandfather was talking the future now that his wife of 57 years was no longer with him. I recall him praying to Allah to grant him the opportunity to be with his wife in Paradise and to grant them everlasting life together. At the time this seemed understandable.

Later, however, the true power of his prayer dawned on me: my grandfather, after having spent more than half a century with his wife, through many hardships, wanted to be with her for eternity.

This story shows us the seriousness and the beauty of marriage. When we get married, it is not only a contract for this life. It might also be a contract for the Hereafter as well.

Not easy

The issue of marriage is not an easy one. These short reflections are just the ideas of one Muslim, among many, trying to find the answers to life and living in a society which seems to be getting more decadent as time goes on. These comments may at times seem confusing, and I myself have difficulty accepting some of them, but we must be willing to take the next step if we truly want to find answers.

At the same time, the question of marriage is serious and we must begin to enter into the discussion in a more meaningful way, so that we too may find mercy, love and stability in the way Allah has taught us.

May Allah grant us an open heart, a loving countenance, and clear thinking. May he grant us dynamism and strength, and guide us to the straight path. May He give us believing spouses and pious children, and foster love and respect for all Muslims, wherever they may be. Ameen.

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The Muslim Voice is an independent newsletter produced by the Muslim Students' Association at the University of Toronto.
The Muslim Voice aims to provide Muslim views on issues and topics of interest to Muslims.

The Muslim Voice is published every two weeks and has a regular distribution of 600 copies. This special issue has a distribution of 2000 copies.

May Allah guide us in all that we do.

(dsyook.)

The Importance of Marriage

By Anis Shivani,
Harvard University

Statistic from USA Today: 40% of Muslims in the United States are single, more than Buddhists who came in at a healthy 39%. There has been tremendous disbelief, and denial of this statistic, but I think that reality easily bears out this statistic.

When I started showing this around at the masjid, people went into immediate denial. Normally, if we read a statistic in an American newspaper that Muslims had, let's say, the highest percentage of doctors in the country (actually true), we would accept that without any quarrel. Normally, we do not dispute their statistics. But so far everyone who is told this statistic reacts with denial.

Postponing Marriage

How can we postpone marriage without any good reason? Usually, our reasons are not legitimate. The important thing is that for many people this is not even an issue on the table, let alone a priority. Men and women (increasingly so) are putting off marriage until after they have finished their PhD's, or whatever higher degrees or career goals they are pursuing.

How come Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal got married the *second* day after his wife died because of fear of Allah? Of course, this is not to be taken out of context, but let's get the point here And Muslim men and women in this country, and increasingly in Muslim countries, believe that they can be immune to every natural desire.

Parents

And how about parents for whom this is either not a priority or they look for unreasonable or inappropriate criteria to be fulfilled in marrying their children. One could be the stupidest moron and he could be a real nasty person, but as long as he has money (well, being a doctor wouldn't hurt), almost every immigrant Muslim will give his daughter to him.

I would like to remind people of the ahadith that say that after a woman attains puberty, her parents are involved in sin for every time that she menstruates and she is not married. There is also the hadith that when a man attains puberty and he is not married, for every sin that he commits (and this would include the sin committed by looking as well), his father is responsible.

And other ahadith tell us that marriage is one of the things, like burying a corpse, which must *not* be delayed. Indeed, the warnings against unnecessarily delaying marriage are very severe indeed.

Criteria for marriage.

Narrated Abu Hurairah (rad): The Prophet (saw) said, "A woman is married for four things, i.e., her wealth, her family status, her beauty and her religion. So you should marry the religious woman, otherwise you will be a loser."

Half the faith?

Why did the Prophet (saw) say that marriage was HALF of religion? It related to the need to regain our calmness, dignity, and self-confidence as Muslims. We cannot do that as long as we remain single and have unhealthy lives. We have much, much larger goals in mind and we cannot let this issue negatively affect the quality of our articulation and interaction.

Keep a simple rule in mind in marriage: if this person will facilitate my objective of becoming closer to Allah then I should marry this man or woman, otherwise not.

And *deen* consists not just of outward things, but many internal things that may not be externally visible immediately such as loyalty, kindness, steadfastness, patience, perseverance, and ability to make sacrifices for the larger goal of pleasing Allah Ta'alaa.

Marrying non-Muslims

Regarding marrying non-Muslims, while the Qur'an does permit it, it is not the preferable thing to do. There are good Muslim women: you simply have to have patience in Allah and leave it to Him. The problems that you would confront in marrying a non-Muslim woman are simply too great, such as who will rear your children? Will you be happy if she takes them to Church or Synagogue and their Islam is diluted? Even if she might be the most beautiful person in the world, it's simply not worth it. 'Umar ibn al-Khattab and many prominent scholars advise against marrying non-Muslim women.

Why aren't Muslims getting married?

Summing up, regarding why Muslims are delaying marriage or not marrying at all, a number of issues that must be addressed as a community. Just to mention a few:

1. *Excessive materialism.*
Only certain professions are preferred. Character, understood in the widest possible sense of the term, and religion are not priorities for many Muslim parents and young men and women.
2. *Not relying on Allah Ta'alaa for rizq*
He promises to make us rich if we don't have money. There are no "guarantees" of rizq in the future. Material success does not necessarily translate to spiritual and emotional fulfillment during a marriage.
3. *Status-consciousness.*
4. *Parents* don't realize importance of early marriage. Like the Hadith tells us, father shares in the sin of the son and parents share in sin of daughter after they attain puberty.
5. *Religious* Stances. There is a wide divergence in 'aqida and in interpretation of rights and responsibilities of men and women. Hence, there is a need to quickly address this so that more uniformity prevails.
6. Thinking that *education and family life* are incompatible. This is not true. At university, there are many non-Muslims married with children. Muslims don't do it. Why?
7. We *must interact with sisters in a healthy way* so that they can regain trust in us and believe that we really and sincerely want to help them and be helped by them. This attitude shows in little things (doesn't have to some grand gesture), just some representation of respect and caring, so that we can get back on a healthy footing among the sexes, which we have lost for the most part. Practice kindness to women: the best among you is he who is kind to women. (Hadith) None of you should find a fault with a woman, for if he should find fault with something, he will find something else that he likes. (Hadith)

There are other reasons, too. These should all be discussed by our communities. The family is the basis of the Ummah. If we lose this, we lose everything else.

There cannot be an Ummah without a proper Islamic family. All thoughts of khilafa and Islamic state and ideal Islamic system are merely forms of escapism. They are just dreams. The reality is *us*, our individual lives, our salat, our deepest motivations and thoughts, our personal relationship with our Creator.

All else is illusion.

I AM AS MY SERVANT THINKS I AM. I AM WITH HIM WHEN HE MAKES MENTION OF ME. IF HE MAKES MENTION OF ME TO HIMSELF, I MAKE MENTION OF HIM TO MYSELF; AND IF HE MAKES MENTION OF ME IN AN ASSEMBLY, I MAKE MENTION OF HIM IN AN ASSEMBLY BETTER THAN IT. AND IF HE DRAWS NEAR TO ME AN ARM'S LENGTH, I DRAW NEAR TO HIM A FATHOM'S LENGTH; AND IF HE COMES TO ME WALKING, I GO TO HIM AT SPEED.
AL-BUKHARI'S 40 HADITH QUDSI: 15

IF ALLAH HAS LOVED A SERVANT HE CALLS GABRIEL (OR WHOM HE PLEASES) AND SAYS: I LOVE SO-AND-SO, THEREFORE LOVE HIM. HE (THE PROPHET) THEN SAID: SO GABRIEL LOVES HIM. THEN HE (GABRIEL) CALLS OUT IN HEAVEN, SAYING: ALLAH LOVES SO-AND-SO, THEREFORE LOVE HIM, AND THE INHABITANTS OF HEAVEN LOVE HIM. HE (THE PROPHET) THEN SAID: THEN ACCEPTANCE IS ESTABLISHED FOR HIM ON EARTH. AND IF ALLAH HAS ABHORRED A SERVANT FOR HIM, HE CALLS GABRIEL AND SAYS: I ABHOR SO-AND-SO, THEREFORE ABHOR HIM. SO GABRIEL ABHORS HIM. THEN GABRIEL CALLS OUT TO THE INHABITANTS OF HEAVEN: ALLAH ABHORS SO-AND-SO, THEREFORE ABHOR HIM. HE (THE PROPHET) SAID: SO THEY ABHOR HIM, AND ABHORRENCE IS ESTABLISHED FOR HIM ON EARTH.
AL-BUKHARI'S 40 HADITH QUDSI: 24

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Eid Prayers or Fashionable Meat Market?

By Noornain Alam

What happens on Eid? The Qur'an is put away, out comes the ghetto blaster to 'celebrate' Eid.

Aaah, but we mustn't forget the frenzy involved in getting ready for Eid; all the preparation of food and clothing.

Clearly, it wouldn't be Eid if we didn't knock ourselves out staying up half the night cooking.

The Real Story

But all this is trivial. The real story is at the Eid prayer grounds. It's sad that a good proportion of people at Eid don't show up to pray but to socialize and show off the latest 'threads.'

The Sisters

These non-prayers stand at the back, yakking away, disturbing those who want to listen to the khutbah and offer Eid prayer.

I suppose that some of the sisters can't pray because, well, you know, the hijab might wreck their carefully hairsprayed 'crowning glory.'

The Brothers

The guys, not to be outdone, flock to the ladies section immediately after prayer to look for their 'mothers and sisters.'

Yeah, right. I can imagine just how urgently they need to speak to their mummies that it can't wait until they get in the car.

And why is it that they need a flock of 5 or 6 other guys to accompany them? Moral support....? Is mummy really *that* scary?

Fun, but how?

I suppose I am being unfair and overgeneralising, especially since to the many sincere people who do whatever they do with the right intention, but as for others...

Yes, Eid is a time for celebration, socializing and having fun. But within limits.

It seems as though all the lessons we learned during Ramadan and after evaporate the minute we hear the soft sounds of clinking *churiyan* (bangles) or spot some 'stud.'

But, then again, maybe it is the lessons that we didn't learn.

This is a shortened re-print of an article written in The Muslim Voice, volume 1 issue 11. It was written about Eid-ul-Fitr, but much of it also applies to our attitudes towards Eid-ul-Adha.

THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE COMPANIONS OF THE PROPHET

Such are the rulings of Prophets...!

One day, Ali bin Abi Talib (r.a), the Fourth Caliph, lost his shield and found his missing shield with a Christian.

Ali immediately took him to Shureih, the judge. Ali (r.a) claimed: "This is my shield which I never sold or gave to anybody."

The judge asked the Christian: "What do you say about the Caliph's claim?"

The man answered: "This is my shield and the Caliph is lying." The judge addressed Ali (r.a): "O Caliph, do you have proof of ownership?"

Ali (r.a) smiled and said: "Shureih is right, I have no proof." The judge then gave his verdict in favor of the Christian, who walked away with the shield.

He had only taken a few steps when he turned back to Ali (r.a) and said: "I declare that such are the rulings of Prophets! The Caliph sues me in the court of his court of his judge who gives his verdict against him! I hereby declare that there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger. The shield is yours, Caliph. I followed the army after the battle of Seffein and the shield dropped from your camel."

Ali (r.a) then answered: "Now, that you have embraced Islam, the shield is yours."

(ref: Islam and Universal Peace, *by Sayyed Qutb)*

THE QUEST FOR MORALITY

By Dilawar Alvi

University courses can be an alienating experience for Muslims. It is often difficult to relate to the ideologies and theories being presented, especially in the areas of Arts and Social Science.

In some cases, the topics being discussed and promoted, such as homosexuality and evolution over creation, are in direct conflict with the teachings of Islam.

Islam's Teachings

However, there are instances when studies being done today reinforce what Islam has been teaching humanity for over 1400 years.

Recently in an Educational Psychology class, the professor highlit three major theories on how adolescents develop morals.

The topic of morality is a relative one in the Western world, depending on what one defines as being moral.

Nonetheless, it was a pleasant change of pace to study something that emphasized good over evil.

At University:

"It is often difficult to relate to the ideologies and theories being presented... However, there are instances when studies being done today reinforce what Islam has been teaching humanity for over 1400 years."

Theories

According to the professor, there are three main theories on how young people develop morals.

The first theory is call the Psycho-analytic Theory and is based on the idea that a battle is going on within a person between their Id, Ego, and Super-Ego (conscience). The victor of this struggle dictates what behaviour will be illicited. Proponents of this theory state that the family is the major influencing factor of an individual's conscience.

The second theory is called the Social Learning Theory, and is based on the premise that adolescents learn morals by modelling other people's behaviour. If this behaviour is reinforced through positive feedback, it will be continued.

The third theory is known as the Cognitive Development Theory. In simple terms, this theory states that if a belief has meaning to individuals and is fully understood by them, then they are more likely to exhibit the behaviour.

For example, if a person is told that drinking alcohol is a sin, but does not understand why and it has no meaning for them, then they are less likely to refrain from drinking alcohol.

So what?

You might be wondering how Islam has anything to do with any of these theories.

Desires and Consciousness

The Psycho-Analytic Theory focuses on the battle between inner desires and the Super-Ego (conscience).

In Islam, every Muslim strives to increase their consciousness of Allah (Taqwa). If a believer is aware of Allah at all times, then they are less likely to commit Haram (forbidden) actions.

Acts of Ibaada such as prayer, fasting, and Zakat (prescribed charity) all build Taqwa, or consciousness of the Creator, in a believer.

When a batle ensues between a person's Nafs (desires) and their conscience, the conscience will, Insha'Allah, be victorious if the person has strong Taqwa.

Role Models

The Social Learning Theorists state that people use modelling to learn behaviours, both good and bad. In Islam, Muslims are supposed to model the actions of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (saw), and to refrain from modelling the behaviours of Shaitan and his followers.

By modelling the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw), Muslims learn how to fulfil the acts of worship that Allah has made mandatory for us in the Qur'an. For example, Allah (swt) tells Muslims to pray; the Prophet (saw) showed us how.

Faith and Knowledge

The Cognitive Development Theory emphasizes the understanding and meaning of a belief in order for it to be practiced.

In Islam, if we do not know something, or are not in control of our actions (i.e., we are insane), then Allah does not hold us accountable for our actions. However, knowledge is something that all believers are commanded to pursue.

As Muslims we know that if something is not understood or has little value for us, then our ability to practice it becomes hampered.

This should give us incentive to seek greater understanding of those areas of Islam that we are weak in.

Morality is the heart of every society.

Allah gave humanity Islam for humans to develop good behaviour. It is our duty to share it with the West, which is still looking for answers to the problems of this part of the world.

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SERIAL MONOGAMY:

The Wave and Its Effect

By Atif Khalil
High School Student

To assert that this society is undergoing a break-up of the traditional family should come as no real surprise. The United States has a divorce rate of 50%, which leads to a high percentage of single parents. As a further challenge to the traditional family, now even homosexual partners are demanding the right to be recognized as 'family' under the law.

What seems to have happened is that, just as in the past when the extended family was replaced by the nuclear family, the nuclear family is being replaced by *no* family.

What many fail to realize is that the break of the family, as evidence indicates, will lead to the destruction and collapse of this society. The family is the foundation of any society; once the foundation crumbles, so will the society.

Marriage is no longer the cherished institution it used to be. The concept of 'till death do us apart' no longer prevails. Divorces are, thus, widespread. Prophet Muhammad (saw) condemned the 'tasters' who move from one marriage to another. In Western society, this is now common, and it is being called *serial monogamy* by experts.

Serial Monogamy

It is noteworthy that in the late 1960s, the popular sociologist Alvin Troffs predicted that temporary, serial marriages would soon replace the life-long marriage. Troffs, predicting the future wave of serial marriages, wrote:

"Instead of wedding 'until death do us part,' couples will enter into matrimony knowing for the first time the relationship is likely to be short-lived."

What is happening now is that such 'relationships' are taking over the place of marriage. Many individuals don't bother marrying and jump from one relationship to another. What is interesting is that these relationships begin when people are as young as 12 or 13. Temporary relationships are really just marriages of sexual convenience; there is neither a legal nor moral bond between the partners.

Repercussions

Troffs may have been accurate in his prediction, but he failed to recognize the repercussions of serial monogamy. We are now aware of how susceptible individuals are to contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) if they 'jump around' from partner to partner. AIDS is an excellent example.

Crime and youth delinquency are also factors that are by-products of broken families, since many youths are being deprived of a proper and healthy family upbringing.

Male children raised in families without a father figure do not have role models to look up to. Children raised in single parent homes may not experience much quality time with the parent, since the parent would be busy trying to provide for the family.

Thus, the children may be deprived of much-needed love and a sense of belonging. Gangs often become alternative families to provide this sense of belonging. Pre-marital relationships become an alternative source of love, a love that a family should provide. A recent study indicated that more than 60% of all serial killers came from broken homes and were raised by single parents....

The Home

Another problem in the Western family is that women no longer want to take the traditional role of centering their life around the home. Feminism has bred a new woman who wants to imitate the man, denying her own biological predisposition.

A unisex, rather than dual sex, society is evolving in which many women want to occupy the same role as men in society, thus leaving a vacuum in the pace of their traditional role.

Now, many women wish to centre their lives around their profession rather than in the upbringing of their children. Children are thus not given the proper attention that they should be given.

The Breakup

The breakup of the traditional family will have much greater effects than people think. It will devastate the social structure of this society. What is interesting is that many people, even the educated, don't realize the catastrophic effects of the breakup of the family. It is reminiscent of Allah's words in the Qur'an:

"We lead them (to destruction) step by step from whence they know not." (8: 182)

Homosexuality: An Islamic Perspective

By Omar Haydar,
University of Michigan MSA

Any homosexual or staunch advocate of freedom for and acceptance of homosexuals will tell you that homosexuality, like any sexual orientation is natural. I would agree, it has natural roots, but not in the way they think....

When they say natural, they usually mean that you are born a homosexual. According to them, it means that you have an inevitable tendency to seek relations with someone of your own gender above any idea of moral marriage and procreation. This instinctive behavior, they say, is unavoidable, and therefore homosexuals must be accepted as legitimate morally guided members of society.

Homosexuality, like heterosexuality, is a natural desire and it affects some people more than others. The *shahwa* (desire) to have sex is a natural tendency that drives a person to either get married or to engage in unlawful sexual interaction.

This desire affects some individuals more than others, as a result of their upbringing, their environment, and their peers. So the directive of any moral-guided individual would be to avoid the unlawful form and to seek the lawful forms -- ie., after marriage.

The same thing applies to the desire to become a homosexual. For some much more than others. Shaitan plants an inkling of desire in their minds. Just as with the desire of sexuality, this affects some more than others, based on external influences. Just as with unlawful outlets for one's sexual impulses, the individual must fight this *shahwa* because homosexuality is morally wrong.

But the difference arises in what Allah has ordained for us regarding our purpose and creation. Generally speaking, Allah has informed us that the way to Hellfire is through the *shahawat* (the desires) and the direction to Heaven is through the *nakirat* (basically the opposite of desires, and typically things we don't like but have to or should do).

So in order for us to achieve success in the Hereafter, as well as success to some degree in this life, we have to live a life of righteousness since Allah has promised us he will reward us both in this life and in the hereafter if we do so.

The Effects

More specifically, homosexuality is one of a group of desires or sins which are morally unacceptable in any circumstance. Just like most of the other acts in this category, the effects of homosexuality are far-reaching and vile, leading only to the deterioration of society. They have one special characteristic in common: they are all basically cyclical in terms of their effect on man. They are usually caused by flares in emotions due to situations or occurrences, such as the desire to hurt or kill someone, or to steal, as well as the desire to commit adultery or even rape, in extreme situations.

If someone were to argue that these are all not natural, I would say they are, but those who exercise self control are able to shun such flare-ups.

The affects of homosexuality on a society are being clearly illustrated today, with the loss of the family and the corruption of the youth.

And Allah has given us an example of what happens to those who transgress and sin and evil becomes prominent in Qawm Lut, the people of Lut. The entire society was destroyed, and all perished with the exception of Lut and a few members of family and other believers.

Allah tells us in the Qur'an: *"Travel throughout or in the earth and see what was the result [or punishment] of those before you."*

Book Review

The Fundamentals of Tawheed

Reviewed by Faraz Rabbani

"It is common knowledge that *Tawheed* is the basis of the religion of Islam and that it is most precisely expressed in the formula: "*La elaah il-lal-laah*" (There is no god but Allah) which states that there is only one true God and that He along deserves to be worshipped. This seemingly simple formula forms that dividing line between *Eemaan* (true belief in God) and *Kufr* (disbelief), according to the tenets of Islam....

"Thus, the principle of *Tawheed* is quite profound and needs further clarification even among Muslims....

"*Tawheed* is the very foundation of Islam on which all the other pillars and principles depend. If one's *Tawheed* is not sound, the rest of one's Islam becomes, in effect, a series of pagan rituals...." [*The Fundamentals of Tawheed*, extracts from Foreword]

Abu Ameena Bilal Philips' book is a thorough explanation of the concept of *Tawheed* (Islamic Monotheism) and its implications in terms of one's faith and acts of devotion.

Abu Ameena describes the categories of *Tawheed* and then the categories of *Shirk* (association of partners with Allah). After this, he covers common mispractices such as the use of charms and omens, fortunetelling, astrology, magic, saint worship and grave worship.

He also covers two areas Muslims are often confused or ignorant about: transcendency (that Allah is above and beyond His creation) and the issue of seeing Allah.

The strength of Abu Ameena's book is that he writes with clarity: he manages to explain quite complex issues in a way that is understandable. In doing so, he uses authoritative sources and refers matters back to the Qur'an and Sunnah whenever necessary.

In his references lie another benefit of the book: Abu Ameena's footnotes are extremely useful. He cites his sources in full and explains anything confusing or of interest in detail. One can learn much just by glancing through the many footnotes.

In short, Abu Ameena Bilal Philips' *Fundamentals of Tawheed* is an enlightening book that clarifies a vital topic for Muslim. Truly a must read.

The Fundamentals of Tawheed
by Abu Ameena Bilal Philips
(Tawheed Publications, 1990, 212 pg , $8)

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ACHIEVING UNITY WITHIN THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

By Syed Nouman Ashraf

We as Muslims should take a moment to look at the fragmented state of the community ponder upon how unity is to be achieved within the Muslim body.

It all has to do with the very meaning of Islam. Islam stands for submission to Allah. The Creator. The Originator. The Mighty. The Wise. The One who brought us out from the depths of darkness into the light. The One who taught us intelligent speech. The One who ordained the cycle of night and day to continue until the end of time. The One who created the Heaven and the Earth for a purpose.

It is this name, Allah, that makes brotherhood an obligation of every Muslim, male or female.

What is the basis of this brotherhood?

It is the submission to His will and the rejection of Kufr. To many of us, Kufr means disobedience.

However, Kufr means much more. It is the covering up of one's ability to reason, thereby preventing a person from submitting to Allah. It is the lack of ability to understand the signs of Allah. Allah says:

So I call to witness the ruddy
Glow of Sunset;
The night and its homing
And the Moon and her fullness:
Ye shall surely travel from
Stage to stage.
What then is the matter with them,
That they believe not?
And when the Qur'an is
Read to them, they fall
Not prostrate.

(Qur'an 84:16-21)

This is Kufr.

A Muslim

Therefore, a Muslim is one who retains the ability to reason and one who submits to the call of the Almighty. Hence, we should realize that we make a *conscious* choice to believe in Allah and his Message to Muslims.

It is not a birthright or a mere accident. We choose Islam out of our free will and we decide to fulfil the obligations and commitments tied to our decision.

Similarly, we have to make a conscious decision to converge as Muslims *before* we congregate as Tablighis, Ikhwanis, Salafis, Jamatis, etc.

We find ourselves belonging to one particular group and we tend to waste our time and effort debating methodology. This is *not* how Allah wants us to be. He warns us to:

Hold fast together, by the
Rope which Allah (stretches out for you),
And be not divided among yourselves;
And remember with gratitude Allah's
Favour on you; for ye were
Enemies and he joined your
Hearts in love, so that by
His grace, ye became brethren;
And ye were on the brink of
The Pit of Fire, and he saved
You from it. Thus doth Allah
Make His signs clear to you:
That ye may be guided.

(Qur'an 3:103)

Ignorance

The biggest obstacle towards attaining unity is ignorance, a disease that is widespread within the Muslim community. Let us remember not to be judgemental of one another in light of what little we know. We are brothers and sisters to one another.

There is an Arabic proverb that says, "Your friend will chew stones for you and your enemy will count your mistakes."

We cannot maintain a brotherhood if we take on a confrontational attitude towards one another. When we come across someone who clings on to a certain point of view that is based on lack of knowledge or ignorance, we should remember that Allah advises us that:

And the servants of (Allah)
Most gracious are those who walk
On the earth in humility, and
When the ignorant address them,
They say, "Peace."

(Qur'an 25:63)

Bickering and Bearing Grudges

There is no room for us to bicker and hold grudges against one another as Muslims. The Prophet, may peace be upon him, said:

"The gates of Paradise will be opened on Mondays and Thursdays, and every servant [of Allah] who associates nothing with Allah will be forgiven, except for the man who has a grudge against his brother. [About them] it is said: Delay these two until they are reconciled, delay these two until they are reconciled, delay these two until they are reconciled." (Hadith related by Muslim, Malik, and Abu Dawud)

We as Muslims have to remember that the only way we will be able to make a positive impact on others is if we can set an example.

In order to do this, we have to solidify our unity and eliminate our internal divisions.

Q & A with AHQ

Our readers ask Sheikh Abdullah Hakim Quick

Q: What advice would you give to a male Muslim who is trying to grow his beard but his family is forcing him to cut it off?

A. *In the Name of Allah, Most Beneficent, Most Merciful. May the Peace and Blessings of Allah be showered upon our Beloved Prophet Muhammad forever.*

My advise to our brother is that he should be polite and respectful to his parents and always maintain Islamic etiquette in his dealings with his family. At the same time, he should remember that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was reported to have said in an authentic Hadith, "There is no obedience to the creation (of Allah) who is disobeying the Creator."

Growing the beard and trimming the moustache is one of the natural ways that Allah distinguishes between men and women. "The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) cursed men who appear like women and women who appear like men." (Muslim)

The Prophet (pbuh) also clearly ordered his Companions to grow their beards and trim their moustaches. In one Hadith, the Prophet (pbuh) said, "Trim your moustaches and let your beards grow. Be different than the Majes (fire worshippers)." (Muslim)

So the scholars of Islam have understood this to mean that growing the beard is one of the required duties of Muslim men. The least judgement given regarding the growing of the beard is that it is a strong Sunnah (*Sunnah Muakkedah*).

Shaving the beard and following Western dress fashions has historically been one of the residues of colonialism. In an attempt to gain upward mobility in colonial society, Muslim men aped the lifestyle of the European colonial rulers.

Today, with the rise of Islamic consciousness and the importance of disenfranchised cultural groups expressing their identity in the changing world order, there is even more necessity for Muslim men as well as women to distinguish themselves from non-Muslims, and no be ashamed of their identity.

I believe, Insha'Allah, that with patience, consistency, love and Islamic sincerity our brother's parents and the older generation will come to see the benefit of being openly Muslim and adhering to the Sunnah of our Blessed Prophet Muhammad Ibn Abdullah (pbuh). May Allah strengthen him and us in this resolve.

Q: What is the Islamic position on friendship with non-Muslims? Some people tell me we can't befriend them...

A. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his Companions had treaties and business relations with non-Muslims. His uncle Abbas and the Banu Hashim clan in the Meccan period and the Jews of Medina are the clearest examples of this. So we are allowed to have associates who are not Muslims.

The Qur'an in Surah Al Maidah tells us: "O ye who believe, take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors. They are but friends and protectors to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them. Verily Allah guides not an unjust people." (5: 51)

In Surah Al Maidah, we are also told: "Your (real) friends are Allah, His Messenger, and the Believers. Thos who establish regular prayers and regular charity, and bow down humbly in worship. As to those who turn for friendship to Allah, His Messenger and the Believers - it is the fellowship of Allah that must certainly triumph." (5: 55-56)

The word for "friends and protectors" here is *Wali* (plural = *Awliya*). It implies allegiance, trust and intimacy. Islamic lifestyle is such that a non-Muslim would find it difficult to become close to a Muslim because of the differing activities and daily demands.

Muslims should therefore take other Muslims as their intimate friends, those friends with whom they share secrets and have total allegiance.

To submit a question, please mail to our address, found on page 2.

Guidance

Hadith on Piety

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet (saw) said:
"Hell is surrounded by desirable things, and Heaven is surrounded by unpleasant things." (reported by Bukhari)

It is narrated by Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said:
"Whenever you see someone better than you in wealth, face, or figure, you should look at someone who is inferior to you in these respects. (So that you may thank Allah for His Blessings.)" (Bukhari, Muslim)

Anas related that the Prophet said:
"The descendant of Adam grows old and decrepit, but two things remain young in him: greed for wealth and greed for long life." (Bukhari, Muslim)

'Amr ibn 'Auf narrated that Prophet Muhammad (saw) said:
"It is not poverty that I fear for you, but I fear that worldly goods may be given to you lavishly as they were given to your predecessors. You will compete with one another in desiring them as they did, and it will destory you as it destroyed them." (Bukhari, Muslim)

Shaddad ibn 'Aus narrated that the Prophet (saw) said:
"The wise and strong amongst you is one who keeps his inordinate appetites under his control and strives for the life after death. And the foolish and weak amongst you is he who subordinates himself to sensual pleasures and hopes for the best from His Lord." (Ibn Majah, Tirmidhi)

Sahl ibn Sa'd related that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said:
"Whoever can give me a guarantee for what is between his two jaws and between his legs, I can assure him Paradise." (Bukhari)

'Amr ibn Maymun related that the Prophet (saw) said:
"Take advantage of five things before five others happen: your youth before you grow old; your health before you fall sick; your money before you become poor; your leisure before you become busy; and your life before you die." (Tirmidhi)

'Adi ibn Hatim narrated that Rasulullah (saw):
"Shield yourself against the Fire of Hell even if it is by giving only half a date in alms, and he who cannot even this should at least utter good word." (Bukhari)

Source: **Guidance from the Messenger: a treasury of abadith** (The Message Publications, New York: 1991, a collection of 602 hadith from authentic sources)

Reflections on the Family:

The Foundation of the Ummah

By Jeewan Chanicka

Family life is a crucial topic. I decided to write about my own family, using it as the basis for a discussion on the role of the family as the foundation of the Muslim Ummah.

My parents were divorced when I was about three years old, after which my father re-married and later on accepted Islam. I would later follow him at the age of about 11. I lived with my Hindu grandparents and my secularly-minded mother. I love them all, and owe them a great deal for my upbringing.

I consider my father and step-mother to be model parents. I adoringly call my step-mother *Umme*, which means mother in Arabic. So this is my family: a father, a mother, three sisters, and three brothers. It is a big family; and I am the oldest child.

Responsibility

My father worked, my step-mother stayed at home. Traditional, if you will.

She would get up early in the morning and get my brothers and sisters ready for school. Often, my father would help, though he was sometimes too tired from the previous day's traveling back to our house.

I lived with my mother, but I would frequently go to see my family and, Alhamdulillah, would benefit from their Islamic guidance.

Umme was in charge of the house -- our very own domestic engineer, so to speak. I used to love to help her do the work, but when I would tire, Umme would just keep going on. Many mothers, do this, but the beauty of a Muslim woman's actions is that she knows that this is her jihad for Allah.

My Father

My father, on the other hand, knew his role as a father: to be the maintainer and protector of the family. The size of the family did not allow us to have all the things we wanted, but we knew that he tried.

On thing about my father is that he wasn't a man that came home from work and plopped into a chair, expecting everything to be done. In fact, he earned our respect by helping out at home.

At times, he would help cook or clean, as well as doing other chores around the house. I remember that when my step-mother was seven months pregnant, my father scolded her for wanting to do house work. I remember him washing, cooking, sweeping, and mopping. And he never ceased to surprise his wife with little gifts.

Raising us up

My parents raised us well: they were our counselors, and friends. They both showed a willingness to consult and listen to us. They always told us that they loved us; even when we were punished, we would be told that it was because they loved us and wanted the best for us.

Islam has been the uniting factor in our family. We lived as a family: we did the chores together, and we had regular family outings, in spite of our financial constraints. I remember the good times: fasting and getting up to praying fajr together. My younger sisters would just imitate us, opening their hands and making du'as in baby language.

My father and Umme always placed Allah first, and would sit and answer all our questions and explain to us why we did certain things other children couldn't do and why we didn't do certain things other children could.

Building the Ummah

How do these things build our Ummah? Each family nurtures a certain set of values in their children, who then take them out of the house and into the society. Strong, well-knit families weave a strong and lasting Islamic social fabric.

My father and Umme taught us practical Islamic ways by example; it was never a case of "do as I say and not as I do." The impact of this was that their children felt strong enough to get involved in community work.

Understanding

Another example is my sisters. At the ages of 5 and 6, they were the first two girls in their school to wear hijab. In the beginning, they were made fun of, but they knew why they were doing it and weren't forced into it. They understood that Allah makes them more beautiful each time they wear hijab.

My father is a source of strength for me: as a family, we don't have a fear of approaching him if we have problems. This stems from a mutual trust and respect; they respect my decisions, even if they may not agree with them all.

Marriage

Take the issue of marriage. When I was around 18, my father sat down and told me that he thought I was ready to get married. I was shocked out of my shoes, but our relationship was such that we could listen to and appreciate each other's views.

If my parents told me not to marry someone, Insha'Allah, I wouldn't. My parents' decisions, I know, would be based on *deen*. Both of them have made it clear that it doesn't matter what race, class or colour my wife is, as long as she is a good Muslim. Umme always says that she wants her children to marry early, so that they stay out of sin.

Guidance and Strength

Had I not had the guidance of a strong family, Allah knows best where I would have been. Take a look around and you will see what the breaking down of the family unit has done to this society. Allah set the straight path out in the Sunnah of His Prophet (saws), and we are shown clearly how a family should function.

I think that my father and Umme helped my brothers, sisters and me by fulfilling their duties to Allah. All praise is for Allah.

Some of my friends found it odd when I talked about having fun with my parents. Alhamdulillah, I always enjoyed having them around. I love Allah and His Prophet (saws), and putting them first has helped me to love, understand and respect my parents more than I possibly could have.

I am not writing this to praise myself or my family; all praise is only for. I just want to show a practical example of a family that has sought to live Islamically. We are not perfect, and Allah has tested us on many occasions. But my parents respect us, and we respect them. This mutual respect has helped us grow in our Islam. Our relationships also friendships; the street runs two ways with us.

Now, I live across the world from my family but they're still one of my greatest sources of strength. Alhamdulillah.

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CONSUMER REPORT

Be careful when buying suede or leather

By Noorain Alam

I had recently gone shopping for a jacket and found just what I was looking for: a gorgeous soft-suede jacket. I checked all the labels on the jacket to determine the source of the suede fabric. The skin type wasn't listed there, so, being naive, I just assumed that it must have been cow-hide. It never occurred to me that it could be anything else; actually, the only reason I checked the labels in the first place was that my mother told me to.

I went home happily with my purchase. As I was throwing out the receipt, I happened to glance at it and this caught my eye: PIGSKIN.

The first though that went through my head was, "Seesh, no way!" To make things worse, the store had a "no refund" policy.

To make a long story short, the manager of the store was, Alhamdulillah, a Muslim.

He let me exchange the pigskin jacket for a cowhide one and gave me some useful advice:

1. Over 90% of the time, in his experience, suede is pigskin.
2. Before making any leather or suede purchase, ask about the source of the hide.
3. One way to distinguish pigskin it that its surface is very porous, whereas cowhide is more smooth.

I know better now, but it is weird to think that now I have to inquire about the origin of the skin each time I buy a wallet, purse, jacket, knapsack, watch, shoes... But better safe than sorry.

One more thing: some people argue that once the pigskin is completely washed and processed and has lost its original form, it is okay to use it.

I spoke to an Imam and he told me that in any *other* animal this can apply, but not the pig.

Each and every part of the pig is Haram for Muslims, no matter what shape or form the pig's parts are in.

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ISLAMIC ACTIVISM ON CAMPUS:

The Future of Muslim Students

By Abdul-Rehman Malik, Amir (President) of the Muslim Students' Association, University of Toronto, St. George Campus

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Islam,

Assalamu Alaikum.

In the name of Allah, Most Merciful, the Mercy-Giving. I bear witness that there is nothing worthy of worship but Allah and that Muhammad is His last messenger and prophet. I also testify that there is no way for us to achieve success in this life and the hereafter except by following Islam as set out in the Qur'an and the example of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.

The end of school and the arrival of the long-awaited summer holidays gives us an opportune time to reflect on the state of our personal Islam and the condition of the Muslim community on campus.

Alhamdulillah, the past year has been an active one for the Muslim Students' Association (MSA) at the University of Toronto. The many programs and initiatives taken on by the MSA were and are indicative of the resourcefulness and power Muslim youth can have when our energies are directed towards the cause of Allah. May Allah reward all the brothers and sisters who spend hundreds of hours planning, preparing and organizing so that we could raise the awareness of both Muslims and non-Muslims about Islam and issues that concern us. The level of activity and commitment shown this year is, Insha'Allah just the beginning and will continue next year and beyond.

However, many challenges still await us as we begin to come together for the next school year. While more Muslims are returning to Islam, there is no doubt that there are thousands of Muslim students leaving Islam and becoming lost among the rest of the university community. The social and moral issues that continue to face Muslim students are symbolic of the myriad of problems that we must deal with if we are going to grow in strength and purpose.

In the past, the MSA has initiated programs to foster a feeling of genuine community spirit amongst Muslim students. This approach has been tried with mixed success. The need for activity is now overshadowed by the need for a definitive strategy to tackle the problems that face Muslim students, both on the campus and within the community. Activity for the sake of appearances is no longer a tangible alternative to taking stands on difficult issues and dilemmas. Thus, the energy of previous years must now be channeled into developing such a strategy.

The new executive of the MSA at U of T (St. George campus) has already begun this process, by examining first our own motivations and then our plans as to the future of Muslims at the University of Toronto. The consensus is rather clear: we need to develop an organization that is activism and da'wah oriented, while still working towards being more inclusive and steadfast in its desire to create a tangible community structure on campus. This is not an easy starting point on which to reinitiate the building of an Islamic organization but, nevertheless, we must try to do exactly that.

The creation of a methodology based upon the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the examples of effective Islamic movements will take time; in fact, it is a process that will never truly end and will continue to be reformulated as long as the MSA chooses to remain dynamic. Yet, the summer months give us some time to establish a plan and approach for next year and beyond that will, Insha'Allah, lead to a better and more dynamic organization.

May Allah bless our efforts and keep us on the straight path. May He grant us wisdom and clear thinking, and may He empower our words and actions so that they may transform the Muslim community into an example for humanity. Ameen

What does the MSA do?

MSA U of T was very active last year, building on the efforts of past years and the commitment of its members. Activities last year included:

- Daily prayers at two locations (ISC and Robarts).
- Juma prayers at Hart House.
- *The Muslim Voice*, this bi-weekly newsletter. 15 issues came out, with circulation increasing from 250 to 700.
- Weekly Da'wah Table at Robarts Library. Display, Qur'ans, and Islamic literature.
- Imam Siraj Wahaj Lecture on "Terrorism vs. Islam."
- Sr. Atika Khan lecture on "Women in Islam."
- Sh. Abdullah Hakim lecture on "Islam: Friend or Foe?"
- Imam Jamil Al-Amin lecture on "Social Justice in Islam." Attendanee of 1500.
- Imam Hamza Yusuf lecture on "The Call to Da'wah."
- Br. Abdul Malik lecture on "Genocide in Bosnia."
- Two Islam Awareness Weeks (October and February).
- Hosted an Inter-MSA Basketball Tournament.
- 3 social dinners, including 300-person Welcome Back dinner.
- 3 iftars.
- "Breaking the Barriers" — an iftar with key U of T staff, professors and department heads.
- Set up the *Islamic Scholarship Fund* with the Muslim Welfare Centre and the Pakistani Students' Association (see page 3).
- Qur'an Tafsir Classes.
- Sisters' Study Circle.
- Sisters' Self-Defence Classes.
- An electronic forum for Muslim students at U of T called "University of Toronto Muslim Students' Network" (UTMSN).

May Allah accept the hard work of countless students who helped make it an active year.

We take this time to say "Jazakallah" to them all.

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